

POLISH AMBASSADOR, ALBANIA'S OMBUDSMAN ORGANIZE SEMINAR ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Irena Lipowicz: "Direct Contact with Ordinary People Shouldn't Be Lost"

Lipowicz, like the Ambassador Jeziorski, brought to Albania the strong wish of Warsaw and ombudsman's institution to cooperate with this Balkan country and its relevant institutions in the sensible field of human rights protection



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BY GENC MLLOJA

TIRANA – A seminar on the protection of human rights and ombudsman's role organized by the Polish Ambassador to Tirana, Marek Jeziorski in cooperation with Albania's Ombudsman's Office highlighted on Monday the importance of the people's advocate for the protection of human rights in general but underscored how important it is to reach out to individuals, ordinary people in a country.

"We should not lose the contact with the ordinary people... It is very important to listen to individual's voice," said Mrs. Irena Lipowicz, Human Rights Defender of Poland, who was the key speaker at the Seminar which was attended by Speaker Ilir Meta, Head of EU Delegation to Tirana, Ambassador Ettore Sequi, Ombudsman Igli Totozani, Chief Prosecutor Adriatik Llalla as well as by representatives of diplomatic corps and associations of civil society in Albania.

"Ombudsman' role is the last solution to any injustice," said Lipowicz, a renowned human rights defender and former lawmaker for 8 years in her country.

Speaking of the prominent role that her office plays in the Polish society, it was striking an example provided by her according to which some 62,000 complaints were received by her office every year which were handled attentively without any political influence.

The achievement of keeping Ombudsman's institution unaffected by politics was illustrated by Lipowicz with the fact that the reports presented by that office to Parliament were not voted by the lawmakers, rather they could discuss issues raised by it. "Only in this way the politicization is avoided," she said.

Lipowicz, like the Ambassador Jeziorski, brought to Albania the strong wish of Warsaw and ombudsman's institution to cooperate with Albania and its relevant institutions in the sensible field of

human rights protections.

"The strengthening of the cooperation between the institutions of people's advocates is a contribution to strengthening the bilateral cooperation between Poland and Albania," said Ambassador Jeziorski being eloquent in playing his role as moderator of the Seminar.

In his greeting, Speaker Meta said that ombudsman's role was important for Western Balkan countries, but especially for Albania. In this frame he insisted that all-inclusiveness was a must even in the field of human rights protection seeing it as one of 12 EU recommendations for Albania to get the candidate status.

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"Ombudsman is the voice of the people. It's good that Poland is

were said by him on the contribution of civil society associations in this field.

Igli Totozani, Albania's Ombudsman, expressed his pleasure about the support that Speaker Ilir Meta had given to his institution.

"Only in two weeks I've had the chance to meet Meta twice," he said, while blaming former Speaker Jozefina Topalli because as Totozani said it was impossible for him to meet her in a two-year time. Also, he praised ministers of the new government, Mimi Kodheli and Erion Veliaj for resolving an issue related to Roma families.

"I hope I will have a very fruitful cooperation with the new government," Totozani told the audience hastening to tell them that there was not a single politicized official in the institution run by him.

Totozani was elected as Ombudsman as the pickup of the Socialist Party when it was in opposition.

After the opening session, the Seminar dwelt at length on special issues under the topics "Strengthening protection of human rights and the role of Ombudsman" and "cooperation of the institution of Ombudsman with civil Society".